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INFO RUEHXP/ALL NATO POST COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 000970

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TAGS: EZ KCFE NATO PARM PREL
SUBJECT: CZECH REACTION TO U.S. NONPAPER ON CFE

REF: STATE 116194

Classified By: Pol/Econ Counselor Michael Dodman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On June 20, post delivered reftel demarche and nonpaper to Veronika Kuchynova-Smigolova, Director for Security Policy at the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Kuchynova-Smigolova said that she would study the U.S. proposal, but her immediate reaction was less than positive. She expressed a two-fold concern that 1) NATO allies would appear as if they were backing down as a result of Russian threats; and 2) NATO would send the wrong signal to countries like Georgia, which have depended on NATO's insistence that Russia implement the Istanbul commitments.

Kuchynova-Smigolova noted that until now, most of the NATO allies have supported -- "correctly" -- the present policy of delaying ratification until after Russia has fulfilled the Istanbul commitments. A change in NATO's current stance would not guarantee Russian cooperation, according to Kuchynova-Smigolova, who believes that Russia has already decided to withdraw from CFE and the U.S. proposal would not have any effect on that decision. Comment: Kuchynova-Smigolova will have the lead in drafting the official Czech position on the U.S. nonpaper. While her initial hard-line reaction may be toned down somewhat by others in the MFA, we expect that the Czechs will remain unenthusiastic about the proposed approach. End Comment.

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